United Nations A/C.2/55/SR.12

General Assembly
Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
27 October 2000

Original: English

Second Committee

Summary record of the 12th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 12 October 2000, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Niculescu ..... (Romania)

Contents

Agenda item 94: Sustainable development and international economic cooperation:

(a) Implementation of the commitments and policies agreed upon in the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries and implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade

(b) Integration of the economies in transition into the world economy

(c) Cultural development

(d) High-level dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership

(e) Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

00-68477 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Agenda item 94: Sustainable development and international economic cooperation (A/55/218):

(a) Implementation of the commitments and policies agreed upon in the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries and implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade (A/55/89-E/2000/80, A/55/209)

(b) Integration of the economies in transition into the world economy (A/55/188)

(c) Cultural development (A/55/339)

(d) High-level dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership (A/55/314)

(e) Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) (A/55/83-E/2000/62, A/55/121)

1. **Mr. Kinniburgh** (Director, Development Policy Analysis Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) introducing the report of the Secretary-General contained in A/55/209, said that the Fourth International Development Strategy had been prepared at a time when there had been a pressing need to revitalize growth in most developing countries and to integrate the economies in transition into the world economy. The Fourth International Development Decade had been the first in which it was possible to envisage a true world economy.

2. During the 1990s, the developing countries as a group grew by 4.4 per cent, compared with 2.3 per cent in the 1980s, yet the improvement in growth was not universal. Incomes in the least developed countries grew by only 0.3 per cent a year, and fell by 0.6 per cent in Africa. Similarly, achieving progress in many transition economies proved more difficult than anticipated. Many social indicators, such as education, health and literacy improved to varying degrees during the 1990s, but none of the specific goals set in those areas were reached. Many poor countries and economies in transition suffered setbacks, due in part to the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS and in part to the unexpected surge in conflicts. In 1990, ironically, there had been much discussion of the contribution of the expected "peace dividend" to development. While reducing poverty, had been the central concern of all four United Nations Development Decades, that goal had yet to be achieved.

3. On a positive note, the series of global conferences held during the 1990s had served to broaden the concept of development and to forge a large degree of consensus on its necessary ingredients, an achievement that would not have been possible in the ideologically divided world of the 1980s.

4. Bearing in mind its current role in development, it was surprising that the word "globalization" did not appear in the Fourth International Development Strategy. Completing the process of globalization and ensuring that it was of benefit to all would be key in the coming decade, but new technologies would help to meet that challenge.

5. Turning to the draft text of an international development strategy for the first decade of the new millennium (A/55/89-E/2000/80), he said that an integral part of any new strategy must be a commitment to support it by providing the necessary resources, both domestically and internationally. In particular, resource transfers through both private and public channels to countries currently being marginalized by the globalization process must be increased. The draft strategy was an effort to consolidate in a single document the key outcomes of the major consensus texts on development issued in the past few years.

6. The report of the Secretary-General on integration of the economies in transition into the world economy (A/55/188) was intended to be descriptive, and should be read in conjunction with the statistics provided in document E/2000/46/Add.2. Despite the enormous challenges posed to the transition economies, Governments had been able to maintain macroeconomic stability and continue their reforms. Inflation remained low and currencies stable. External balances had also improved, and it was expected that the Russian Federation would end the year with a budget surplus. The prospect of accession to the European Union had given the Baltic States a concrete goal to strive for, but the countries of the

Commonwealth of Independent States remained more isolated in the world economy and their financial integration was slower. The United Nations system remained ready to assist those countries in completing their transition to a market economy.

7. **Mr. Khan** (Director, Division of ECOSOC Support and Coordination, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on renewal of the dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation through partnership (A/55/314), said that it suggested steps to be taken in preparation for the second high-level dialogue which was scheduled to take place in early September 2001. Among suggested themes were the role of the United Nations in supporting African countries in achieving development, and the role of the United Nations in the transfer of knowledge and technology. The format would again be a combination of plenary meetings and round tables.

8. **Ms. Tibaijuka** (Executive Director, United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)), introducing the report of the Commission on Human Settlements acting as the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly to review the implementation of the Habitat II conference (A/55/121) and the report on the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda (A/55/83-E/2000/62), said that, in the new millennium, half of humanity were urban dwellers, and within 25 years, two thirds would be. Most of that rapid increase would come in the developing countries. Urban-based economies contributed a major share of gross domestic product (GDP) in most countries. Cities could be engines of growth and models of democracy and multicultural coexistence, but those same cities could be places of exploitation, disease, violent crime, unemployment, underemployment and extreme poverty.

9. Poverty was increasingly becoming an urban phenomenon, and the feminization of poverty was another aspect of urbanization. Enhancement of women's rights and control over resources and their increased involvement in planning and decision-making should be central to overall improvements in urban management.

10. A new era of globalization of the economy and information and localization of social and political life had begun. The role of national Governments had become more complex, and local, national and global governance must be redefined and reinvented to adapt to new realities. The Habitat Agenda was essentially a local agenda which required local actors, as the communities of the globalizing world learned best practices from one another.

11. One of the main outcomes of the Committee's work at the current session should be to improve coordination of the review of shelter and sustainable urban development policies. It was time to take stock of progress made in activities at the national and local levels, partnership and the role of civil society, monitoring and assessment and international cooperation.

12. The Habitat work programme for the current biennium focused on the two main themes of the Habitat Agenda — adequate shelter for all and sustainable urban development. She highlighted the Global Campaign for Good Urban Governance, which focused on the essentials of proper management of cities and human settlements. Good urban governance was a precondition for economic efficiency, especially when it provided a framework for sustained action against poverty. The Cities Alliance between Habitat and the World Bank also addressed the two main goals of the Habitat Agenda and could become a major global initiative. To encourage further inter-agency cooperation, Habitat, in consultation with UNDP, was working to bring urban concerns to the top of the agenda of the United Nations Development Group.

13. She hoped to bring before the special session a draft of the world charter of local self-government. The first objective of the special session would be to carry out a forward-looking review of progress in implementation of the Habitat Agenda at the local and regional levels. After reviewing a number of regional meetings and conferences scheduled as part of the preparatory process, she underscored her personal commitment to make UNCHS a centre of excellence in sustainable urban development in the new millennium.

14. **Mr. Wiebgen** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), introducing the report on the status of preparations for the International Year of Mountains, 2002 (A/55/218), said that the Year offered a major opportunity to increase awareness of the global importance of mountain ecosystems and to promote action, especially at the national level, to achieve sustainable human development and conservation in mountain areas. The report described

some potential models for national institutional arrangements for action relating to the Year. It also commented on the development of criteria for sustainable mountain development, the high rate of food insecurity and malnutrition in mountain areas and the impact of watershed management on the quality and supply of fresh water to downstream areas. Adequate funds must be raised, not only to observe the Year but also to implement long-term programmes for sustainable mountain development and conservation. Further information about the Year was available in a Concept Paper produced by FAO.

15. **Mr. Hamad** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) introducing the report of the Director-General of UNESCO on cultural development contained in document A/55/339, said that globalization was having a subtle but pervasive impact on the cultural life of nations. Because the means of production of cultural goods were unduly concentrated in one part of the world, mass-produced culture was tending to replace individual creativity and cultural diversity in less advanced societies. The international community should therefore bear in mind the need to preserve a sustainable pattern of cultural development.

16. **Mr. Radolf** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) explained that the biannual report on communication for development programmes in the United Nations system, to be submitted in 2001 in accordance with resolution 51/172, would be a consolidated inter-agency report and would include the results of the seventh Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development, organized by UNICEF in Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, from 10-13 November 1998. The participants had examined ways of reinforcing cooperation between United Nations agencies, donors, NGOs and universities, including the possible creation of a web site to collect research results and methods used by programmes for communication for development. The meeting had also recognized the strategic role of community media, and had proposed an inventory of best practice to facilitate training in communication.

17. UNESCO had undertaken a number of new initiatives, in partnership with other United Nations agencies, to help disseminate information about development by strengthening communication and information technology capacities in developing nations. It was involved with a number of community radio projects, and had already been engaged in setting up multi-purpose community telecentres. It was committed to extending public access to information through the use of information and communication technologies, by enhancing the quantity of information in the public domain, developing training at the local and national levels, building up digital libraries and helping to develop the local content of programmes in local languages. UNESCO would shortly be convening a meeting at its headquarters under the title "INFOethics 2000".

18. UNFPA's communication for development activities treated communication as a tool for advocacy, resource mobilization, partnership building and capacity-building. Its field programmes used communication to draw attention to the needs of couples, families and individuals in the areas of reproductive health and population. It had organized a number of international seminars in the years 1997-1999 on the use of communication and information technologies in support of its programmes at the country level, to promote implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. It had also produced training modules on communication in advocacy for a distance learning programme on population, and had worked with UNAIDS on the campaign to involve men in combating HIV/AIDS. It would continue working with agencies in the new technology information sector to improve community access to basic connectivity and to enhance the local content in population and reproductive health programmes.

19. Within UNICEF, communication for development was part of the process of social transformation, operating through advocacy, social mobilization and programme communication. During 2000, its major projects included institutionalizing community participation in its programming and communication for polio eradication, for an expanded programme of immunization and for preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS. It had created an Internet site called "Voices of Youth" to link children and adolescents in different countries.

20. **Mr. Anaedu** (Nigeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that in the aftermath of the cold war, there were tremendous opportunities to invest in the transformation of the human condition. The development strategy of the Fourth United Nations

Development Decade aimed to create an international environment which would ensure accelerated economic growth and social development in the developing countries, as a foundation for enhanced international cooperation. Some progress had been achieved and the necessary climate now existed to create political systems based on democracy and respect for human rights.

21. Nevertheless, even at a time of unprecedented wealth creation 1.2 billion people, mostly in the developing countries, were still living in extreme poverty. Few developing countries were able to reduce poverty or meet the objectives of the present development strategy, because of the burden of external debt, unstable financial markets, and the decline in financial resources for development, including official development assistance. They were unable to take advantage of the benefits of globalization or the opportunities offered by the new information and communication technologies. The development strategy for the next decade must therefore tackle the central problem of inadequate resources for economic growth and social development, at both the domestic and the external levels. It must improve the flow of development finance, and developed countries should fulfil the agreed target for official development assistance. The debts of developing countries must be cancelled outright. The new strategy should ensure that the international trading system was fair and transparent, and provided market access for developing country products. Without adequate resources, the developing countries could not resolve the problems of HIV/AIDS, environmental degradation and socio-economic development.

22. The Group of 77 supported the efforts made within the United Nations system to bring about the integration of countries with economies in transition into the world economy. However, those efforts should not be allowed to displace development programmes for African and least developed countries, many of which had also embarked upon fundamental reforms.

23. In developing countries, culture could foster creativity and help to engender economic growth. The Group of 77 commended the support given by the World Bank and regional financial institutions to cultural programmes. It also supported UNESCO's proposals to promote public policies recognizing the role of culture in development, through the mobilization and sharing of information and knowledge. It urged implementation of the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development, and supported the convening of a two-day high-level dialogue on the integration of developing countries into the world economy, to be held immediately before the fifty-sixth General Assembly. The dialogue should focus on mechanisms to effect social integration, including capacity-building, technical knowledge and transfer of technologies, and the mobilization of financial resources.

24. The forthcoming special session of the General Assembly for a review of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, to be held in June 2001, should focus on implementing, not revising, the Agenda. The developing countries should be encouraged to take a full part in both the preparatory process and in the session itself, and funds should be made available to enable them to send delegates. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements should be strengthened and made more efficient. The Committee should place development issues at the heart of its agenda for the first decade of the new millennium.

25. **Ms. Gras** (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the associated countries, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia and Turkey, said that the report of the Secretary-General (A/55/209) showed that although there had been some progress in reviving or accelerating economic growth and access to basic social services, regional disparities had become more evident, and the situation in sub-Saharan Africa and in the least developed countries was especially unfavourable. That was a disappointing finding for the European Union, because it provided 54 per cent of all official development assistance, and 58 per cent of contributions to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Trust Fund. The European Union was committed to working to achieve the target for official development assistance of 0.7 per cent of gross national product, but took the view that ODA should supplement national resources and act to mobilize direct international private financial investment in the developing countries. Aid should be made more effective by better management of programmes in the field and by consolidating partnerships between United Nations agencies, the international financial institutions and

multilateral and bilateral actors. Progress in implementing the enhanced HIPC Initiative was essential in order to allow recipient countries to mobilize new resources for reducing poverty.

26. The European Union was determined to increase political awareness of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which was now the leading cause of death in Africa, and favoured holding a special session of the General Assembly on the problem.

27. Bringing together in a single document the objectives approved by the international community at the major conferences of the 1990s, as proposed by the Secretariat, would be an appropriate way of presenting the development strategy for the first decade of the new millennium, and would require the Member States and the multilateral institutions to play as active a part as possible. The chapters on good governance and human rights should be strengthened. To ensure that the resources allocated to development were properly used, public affairs must be soundly managed by accountable institutions, the rule of law must be strengthened and citizens must be involved in the decisions which affected them. Respect for human rights was an important factor in equitable development. The results of the recent special sessions of the General Assembly on social development and the advancement of women should be followed up in a coherent manner in order to achieve the goal of sustainable development.

28. Turning to agenda item 94 (b), she said that the European Union was anxious to see all countries benefit fully from the opening up of international trade. It was determined to help the countries in transition establish coherent domestic policies, promote stability and security, build private and public institutional capacity, and deal with the problems of corruption, criminalization and the hidden economy. It urged United Nations agencies and regional economic commissions to step up their efforts to integrate the countries in transition into the world economy.

29. With regard to agenda item 94 (e), she hoped the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly for an overall review of the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements would raise awareness of the challenges facing the world's cities, and would adopt a declaration on human settlements in the new millennium. It should also reaffirm the commitments of Habitat II, focusing equally on adequate shelter for all and on sustainable human settlements in an urbanizing world. The representatives of international associations of local authorities should be involved as closely as possible, alongside Government representatives, in the follow-up to the Habitat Agenda. National governments also had an important role to play in that regard. The Member States of the European Union would support the preparatory process for the review conference, and would continue supporting their partner developing countries through bilateral cooperation and the programmes managed by the European Union.

30. **Mr. Kolby** (Norway) said that the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) must actively address one of the most pressing issues at the turn of the century — accelerating urbanization in the developing countries, an issue which had been highlighted in both the report of the Secretary-General entitled "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century" (A/54/2000) and the United Nations Millennium Declaration. He welcomed the partnership between Habitat and the World Bank under the Cities Alliance and its action plan, "Cities Without Slums", and hoped that that afternoon's panel discussion, would inspire more countries to support its goals. Norway had been one of the early supporters of the Alliance's Global Campaign for Secure Tenure and was anxious to see it successfully implemented. The Campaign should focus on the role of women and the need to establish their right to, inter alia, own and inherit land and obtain housing loans. Already, the Campaign's success in India and Africa had attracted attention to that important issue at the highest political level.

31. Important preliminary discussions had taken place during the first substantive session of the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). His delegation looked forward to the second substantive session, which would benefit from inputs from the session of the Commission on Human Settlements, and to the regional preparatory meeting for the overall review to be held in Vesterås, Sweden, in November. It hoped that the General Assembly would endorse resolution 1/3 on the scope to be covered by the review and appraisal process, adopted by the preparatory committee at its first substantive

session, as well as the guidelines for participation in the special session, which acknowledged the role of local authorities and non-governmental organizations.

32. The theme of the second high-level dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership, namely, "Responding to globalization: facilitating the integration of developing countries into the world economy in the twenty-first century", was highly relevant and useful. As for the modalities for the dialogue, his delegation supported the recommendations to combine plenary meetings, ministerial round tables and informal panels, and for a President's summary to constitute the outcome of the dialogue.

33. **Mr. Isakov** (Russian Federation) said that, with regard to item 94 (a), the report of the Secretary-General (A/55/209) provided a generally objective picture of the economic and social changes in the 1990s. Despite the evident progress, there had been no major advances in poverty eradication, and very little progress in the development of a large group of countries, including low and middle-income countries. In that situation, it was essential to learn fully from the mistakes and miscalculations of the past decade and build a new international development strategy based on the new realities of a globalized and interdependent world, taking into account the conceptual findings and recommendations of United Nations global forums. The draft international development strategy for the current decade (A/55/89-E/2000/80) rightly focused on the priority objectives identified at the millennium summit. It was crucially important to its practical implementation that the strategy should command broad support both on the part of Member States of the United Nations, and on that of the United Nations development partners, including the multilateral institutions.

34. The report on the integration of the economies in transition into the world economy (A/55/188) provided useful factual information, but in future should focus more on analysis. Over the past two years, a number of countries with economies in transition had achieved significant progress in reforming their economies, overcoming the adverse effects of the financial crisis, and establishing a new infrastructure and institutional mechanisms; however, that process had not yet been completed. Most of those countries faced urgent tasks of full integration in the multilateral trading system, structural transformation of their economies, strengthening their financial and banking sectors, attracting direct foreign investment, protecting the environment, and strengthening democracy and public administration. Assistance from the international community, including technical assistance from the United Nations, would help them address those tasks.

35. The very concept of "transition" was limited in time. A number of countries with economies in transition had almost completed the transition process, and would soon be capable in some degree of joining the donor community. The duration of the final stage would depend to a considerable extent on the effectiveness of the international assistance provided to them. His delegation believed that successful experience of transition could be used by other countries, especially developing countries. The United Nations had unique possibilities for disseminating that experience.

36. In general his delegation approved of the preparations for the second high-level dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership and considered that the topics which had been selected were appropriate. At the same time, it believed that the preparatory process should be conducted with the participation of all interested delegations, and that its transparency must be ensured.

37. His delegation welcomed the outcome of the first session of the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, and believed that the decisions made during that process should be balanced and pragmatic and should take into account the interests of all countries.

38. His delegation supported the work of the United Nations in preparation for the International Year of Mountains, which was a useful and necessary initiative.

39. **Mr. Osei-Danquah** (Ghana) said that despite the successful implementation of macroeconomic stabilization policies and liberalization by developing countries in the 1990s, their economic and social situation had not improved significantly and, in some regions, had even deteriorated. Those failures were well-documented in the report of the Secretary-General (A/55/209, para. 8) and were attributable, in turn, to the failure to implement policies at the international level on trade, debt, and international financial flows as well

as declining official development assistance and the slow progress of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative.

40. In designing an international development strategy for the first decade of the new millennium based on lessons learned, the premise must be that the development of the developing countries was in the interest of the developed countries. Much remained to be done in order to address the weaknesses of the current disjointed development architecture. The time had come for a concerted approach synchronizing actions on macroeconomic reform, debt, market access, strengthened financial architecture and increased public/private partnerships. Adequate official development assistance and an environment which balanced economic efficiency with social progress would be vital to that end. Developing countries, for their part must strive to ensure good governance and sound political and economic management. That shared responsibility of developing countries and the international community should be reflected in the high-level international intergovernmental consideration of financing for development, the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and the reviews of and follow-up to the major global conferences.

41. **Mr. Oratmangun** (Indonesia) said that his delegation had worked very closely with the Group of 77 and China and other negotiating partners to ensure the adoption of General Assembly resolution 54/213, which established "Responding to globalization: facilitating the integration of developing countries into the world economy in the twenty-first century" as the theme of the second high-level dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership. It was pleased that the sub-themes and modalities of the dialogue had been determined, namely, promoting the integration of developing countries into the world economy and generating new public and private financial resources to complement development efforts and enhancing the integration of developing countries in the emerging global information network, facilitating access for developing countries to information and communication technology (A/55/314, paras. 9 (a) and (b)), and was prepared to work closely with other delegations in the preparations for and organization of the high-level dialogue.

42. Turning to item 94 (e), he stressed the need to implement the twin goals of providing adequate shelter for all and developing sustainable human settlements. In general, the Committee's deliberations were taking place against a sombre backdrop — half the world's population living in absolute poverty, increasing numbers of homeless persons, a soaring population, rapid urbanization and the growth of mega-cities. In Asia, the situation was compounded by the negative impact of globalization, political and economic instability and the displacement of large numbers of people in the wake of natural disasters. As a result, slums and squatter settlements had mushroomed there and even outpaced normal urban growth rates.

43. The forthcoming overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the key principles of the Habitat Agenda and the 20 key commitments and strategies proposed by the Commission on Human Settlements should serve as a forum to address the current condition of human settlements, exchange information on policy and legislative decisions made at the national, regional and global levels and share best practices and lessons. The overall review should focus not only on actions taken at the local level but also on ways and means of generating new and additional financial resources to implement the Habitat Agenda, and on the need for enhanced international cooperation. His delegation called on the international community to support the participation of the developing countries in the preparatory process, including their participation in regional meetings, and in the special session itself. Support should also be given to the inclusion of local authorities, youth and women in national delegations to the special session. Consistent with the Habitat Agenda, a family stability support perspective should be integrated in human settlements legislation, policies, programmes and projects, while respecting various religious, ethical and cultural values.

44. His delegation welcomed the various initiatives and actions to be implemented by the Commission on Human Settlements. It encouraged the organizations of the United Nations system to fulfil their respective commitments under the Habitat Agenda and to coordinate their work more closely, where possible. The Habitat task manager system would be an effective tool for strengthening the role of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) as a focal point for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. His delegation also welcomed the Centre's global

campaigns to combat poverty and improve the quality of urban life and human settlements in an age of unprecedented urbanization. The new strategic vision for the comprehensive implementation of the Habitat Agenda for the biennium 2000-2001 would help to revitalize the Centre and enhance its coordinating role, including with other international organizations and the funds and programmes of the United Nations. His delegation commended the revitalization programme promoted by the Acting Executive Director of Habitat, which should strengthen the Centre's capacity in the areas of information monitoring and the assessment of global and regional human settlement trends. The provision of adequate financial resources by Governments, particularly donor countries would also be crucial.

45. Although it had been severely affected by the financial crisis, and was having difficulty meeting the growing demand for subsidized, low-cost housing, including in the urban areas, Indonesia had launched a major reform programme which would grant greater autonomy to local authorities by 2001. His delegation requested additional support from the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements and other organizations of the United Nations system, including technical assistance in implementing strategies for community-based housing development and the transfer of knowledge on low-cost building technology for affordable housing.

46. **Ms. Ibraimova** (Kyrgyzstan) said that the basic mission of the International Year of Mountains 2002 as outlined in the report on the subject (A/55/218) was the basic mission of the conservation and sustainable development of mountain regions, thereby ensuring the well-being of mountain and lowland communities. The success of the year would depend on follow-up at the various levels, translated into effective action at the field level involving income-generating activities for poverty reduction, support for indigenous peoples and other vulnerable groups, the sustainable use of natural resources, and the preservation of biodiversity and ecological systems.

47. There had been several positive developments at the international level, including the launching by the United Nations University of a new project on the sustainable development of mountain systems. Her delegation was encouraged by initiatives at the national and regional levels, and the efforts of international and regional organizations in studying ways to solve the socio-economic problems of mountain populations.

48. With a view to laying the foundations for the sustainable development of the Kyrgyz Republic's mountain regions, which covered 96 per cent of its territory, and to preparing for the Year, a national programme for the preparation and conduct of the International Year of Mountains had been adopted. The programme took into account the suggestions of non-governmental organizations, local governments and academia. A national centre for the development of mountain areas had been established in January 1999, in conjunction with several non-governmental organizations. An international conference on the "mountains of Central Asia" had been held in May 1999; it had been followed, in November 1999, by a regional scientific conference in Bishkek.

49. A unique project had been formulated for the establishment of four pilot mountain villages in different provinces of the Kyrgyz Republic. The project would incorporate modern technologies and create patterns of settlement that would allow mountain-dwellers to maintain their households, conduct business and, ultimately, resolve their socio-economic problems.

50. Her delegation believed that it was vitally important to adopt a new approach to mountain regions, to change public awareness, and to promote self-sufficiency and sustainable development.

51. **Mr. Nimac** (Croatia), referring to agenda item 94 (b), said that the report of the Secretary-General (A/55/188) illustrated the importance of the role of the United Nations in assisting countries with economies in transition. Economic transition was a lengthy process, in which new institutional arrangements were of key importance; since institution-building was a gradual process, transition had to take place in a gradual manner. Moreover, since the countries in transition were diverse and had progressed at different rates, they needed a variety of forms of assistance.

52. The main goal of transition should be sustainable growth, and full integration into the world economy. Unfortunately, all countries in transition had experienced a severe contraction, along with increased unemployment and other social problems. Unless the current, relatively modest, levels of assistance provided by the international community were maintained, the social and economic problems were likely to worsen.

53. Small economies in transition faced particular difficulties in obtaining access to foreign markets, but had little choice but to opt for an open and export-oriented trade policy. For Croatia, membership in the World Trade Organization would enhance that process.

54. His Government believed that the forthcoming high-level event on financing should specifically address the needs of countries with economies in transition. It looked forward to the inputs of the Economic Commission for Europe at regional consultations to be held in December 2000. It also believed that assistance was needed through collaborative efforts involving Governments, the multilateral development institutions, the private sector and civil society so that countries with economies in transition could take full advantage of information and communications technologies as a development tool.

55. **Mr. Svetogorsky Marino** (Uruguay), speaking on agenda item 94 (c), said that the international community needed to be fully aware of the need to integrate the cultural dimension more fully into the development process at the global level; that must be reflected in the adoption of policies and practices in the area of development. The rapid advances in communication and information technologies were creating a new cultural dimension with two fundamental aspects: development and knowledge.

56. In the context of globalization, the Committee needed to reflect on the development of societies and the challenge of demographic growth in an often fractured world, and must promote a pluralism which would ensure the transition from a culture of force, violence and coercion to a culture of tolerance, peace and dialogue. His delegation welcomed the initiative to proclaim 2001 the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, since globalization required a recognition of the dignity and equality of the cultures of individuals.

57. His delegation welcomed the continued efforts to fulfil the recommendations made by the Director-General of UNESCO at the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development. It proposed that one of the years devoted by the United Nations to the eradication of poverty should be devoted to considering the relationship between culture, development and poverty.

58. Uruguay had spearheaded efforts within the Organization of American States to pool knowledge by coordinating the educational and scientific systems of the countries concerned and promoting close cooperation between universities at the regional level. The great challenge which lay ahead was how to apply that knowledge to achieve greater development. To that end, the younger generation must be trained to take advantage of the new technologies and deal with the irreversible process of globalization. The values of a culture of peace should help the international community achieve the goals of eliminating poverty, reducing inequalities, eradicating violence and ending wars. Peace depended on a unanimous and sincere commitment; the culture of peace should therefore be the universal culture which all the peoples should share.

59. The presentation of cultural diversity was essential for the international community. Peace, democracy and development were its essential foundations. The provision of a proper education to children and young people was the main way his Government sought to achieve economic change, secure better political participation and build world peace.

60. **Mr. Talbot** (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that were Members of the United Nations, said that with regard to item 94 (a), the CARICOM delegations considered that it was important that the United Nations should continue to pursue a strategic approach to development. The Millennium Declaration provided an important frame of reference in that regard; moreover, many of the commitments and policies agreed upon in the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation and in the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade remained valid. Over the past decade, there had been many setbacks, including the adverse effects of globalization and a marked decline in official commitment to international cooperation, and many countries had been left with increasing poverty and economic marginalization.

61. The Millennium Summit had established a set of development goals with clear time-frames for their achievement. It was now necessary to assess in specific terms what needed to be done to reach those goals, to explore the policy implications of those goals at the national and international levels and their implications in terms of the functioning of the international

machinery in support of development, including the United Nations and other multilateral institutions, and to address the question of resource requirements. On that basis, it would be possible to craft appropriate policies, strategies and actions in support of national action, taking into account the particular circumstances faced by countries and regions.

62. The international community should seriously consider the need for time-bound commitments on the provision of the necessary resources. The CARICOM countries proposed that the official development assistance target should be placed within a time-bound framework and linked to output targets. Similar frameworks should be envisaged for technology transfer and capacity-building among other areas.

63. With regard to item 94 (c), the CARICOM Governments attached great importance to promoting cultural development and respect for cultural diversity. Though small, the Caribbean community had a variety of cultures and cultural expressions and was proud of its contribution to the common cultural heritage. It periodically hosted a Caribbean Festival of Creative Arts, the most recent of which had been held in St. Kitts and Nevis. At the global level, CARICOM remained strongly supportive of the efforts of UNESCO to promote cultural development and stressed the importance of implementing the outcome of the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development.

64. With regard to item 94 (d), he said that the need for a more results-oriented dialogue had become all the more evident in the current era of globalization. CARICOM believed that the dialogue on international economic cooperation must enable the international community, in particular the developing countries, to deal in an effective manner with the promise and perils of globalization. The United Nations had a key role to play in that regard.

65. On item 94 (e), the CARICOM Governments were conscious of the need to bridge the gap between the policy formulated at the international level and that implemented at the national and regional levels, in view of the rapidly increasing demand for adequate shelter and basic services. They continued to look to the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements for guidance and support with respect to the structuring and implementation of human settlements programmes. The withdrawal of the Habitat regional office in 1997 had therefore dealt a major blow to the implementation of programmes in the region. Another major setback had been the unavailability of financial resources and lack of a synchronized programme for regional counterpart agencies. As a result, the framework for shelter management and development at the regional level had been weakened and a number of activities had had to be curtailed or deferred. CARICOM called for immediate and intensified action, particularly with respect to increased funding for programmes related to human settlement development, dealing not only with rapid urbanization, but also with the rural dimension.

66. With regard to the reforms undertaken to enhance the roles of UNEP and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, the CARICOM countries were pleased that priority had been accorded to the needs of women and their participation in urban governance, since the increasing urbanization of poverty and the high proportion of women-headed households made it important to address their concerns.

67. **Mr. Klopotowski** (Poland) said that, after a decade of structural reforms, Poland now had an open, market-based economy in which the competitive private sector accounted for two thirds of economic activity. Poland's solid growth, macroeconomic stability, sound monetary policy, established banking system, modernized industry and reformed pension system had attracted foreign investors and helped it to withstand the global economic turbulence of recent years. Poland now aspired to membership in the European Union and was taking steps to complete that process by the end of 2002.

68. His delegation was concerned, however, at the growing disparity in economic performance, institutions and structures among the countries with economies in transition; indeed, very few of the former command economies had made a full and truly successful transition. The necessary reforms had been accompanied by an unprecedented degree of social deprivation — massive unemployment, widespread poverty, drastic inequalities, deteriorating public services, drug abuse, health problems and a rise in criminal activity, including organized crime. Those social ills had a particularly severe impact on the most vulnerable groups in society. An excellent analysis of those difficulties was contained in the recent World Bank report entitled "Making Transition Work for Everyone: Poverty and Inequality in Europe and Central Asia".

69. His delegation encouraged the organizations of the United Nations system to carry out analytical activities and provide policy advice and technical assistance to the countries with economies in transition. It supported United Nations activities which promoted market-based economic reforms, structural adjustment, private enterprise, foreign direct investment and the integration of the transition economies into the multilateral trading system. In conclusion, Poland was willing to share its rich experience in order to enhance capacity-building in other transition countries.

70. **Mr. Osio** (Nigeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that since the Economic and Social Council had adopted two draft decisions on the subject of operational activities for development, no draft resolution would be prepared on that subject at the current session.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.